



232  
N8 W3  
opy 1



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

*Chap.* F 232

*Shelf* . N8 W3

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



















AN ADDRESS

EMBRACING A

# HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF NORFOLK COUNTY,

DELIVERED AT BERKLEY, JULY 4th, 1876, BY REQUEST OF THE  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, BY

HON. LEGH E. WATTS,

JUDGE OF THE COUNTY COURT OF NORFOLK COUNTY.

NORFOLK, VA.:

PRINTED AT THE LANDMARK BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.  
1876.





AN ADDRESS

EMBRACING A

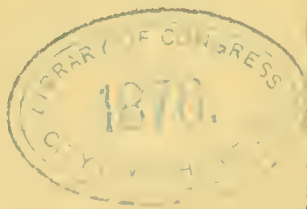
# HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF NORFOLK COUNTY, VA.,

DELIVERED AT BERKLEY, JULY 4TH, 1876, BY REQUEST OF THE  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, BY

HON. LEGH R. WATTS,

JUDGE OF THE COUNTY COURT OF NORFOLK COUNTY.



NORFOLK, VA.:

PRINTED AT THE LANDMARK BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

1876.

F222  
.178 W3



# HISTORICAL SKETCH

## OF NORFOLK COUNTY.

---

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

I know of no more fitting and appropriate way of celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of our National Independence than that suggested by His Excellency, the President of the United States, in his Proclamation of May 25th, 1876, in pursuance of which we are this day assembled.

If the Historical Sketches, which he recommends, are accurately and properly prepared, great and beneficial results will ensue: for the accumulation of so large a mass of reliable information and correct data must prove a valuable acquisition to the historian not only of the respective States, but also of the entire country. In the preparation of this history, we should take a lively and patriotic interest—for when it is impartially written, Virginia will be emblazoned on its brightest page, and its most brilliant chapter will record the splendid heroism and grand achievements of her sons; and our own loved “tide-water” section will vie with her sister counties of the Southwest and the Piedmont, of the Valley and the mountains of West Augusta, in the thrilling interest of their revolutionary and later history.

Appreciating, as I do, these facts, I am profoundly impressed with a consciousness of my inability to discharge in a satisfactory manner the duty which the generous partiality of the Board of Supervisors has assigned me, in the ceremonies of the day, and I regret, very much regret, that some one better qualified to do justice, alike to the theme and the occasion, was not selected.

In endeavoring to perform the task thus imposed, I shall attempt no oratorical display, nor seek to weave the flowers of fancy with the graces of elocution. Were I capable of such efforts, I do not think the circumstances by which we are surrounded, or the times in which we live, would justify them; although as a people we have much to be proud of, and much, very much, for which we should be devoutly

thankful. I know of nothing to justify wild and exuberant congratulation or self-satisfied enthusiasm ; while in the present condition of our country there is much to excite alarm, there is nothing to encourage or confirm an infidel despair. The cause of constitutional government and civil liberty is secure if the people of the entire country, rising above party and party politics, section and sectional prejudices, will devote this day to a calm and dispassionate review of the first century of our existence as a nation. Let them consider whether our national growth, development and prosperity has been all that is claimed by the devotees of modern progress. Let them ask themselves the question : Has our material advancement made us a wiser, a more virtuous or a happier people ? These reflections, if honestly indulged in, will give them pause, and cause them to long for a return of the purer and better days of the Republic.

Before presenting a brief sketch of the "History and Antiquities of Norfolk County," I propose giving, by way of prelude or introduction, certain facts and incidents connected with the early discovery and settlement of Virginia. This will be necessary to a full appreciation of the difficulties and privations experienced by those hardy adventurers who first discovered the main continent of America among the "polar bears, the rude savages, and the dismal cliffs of Labrador," and their descendants, who extended their discoveries and increased their settlements, until finally the boundaries of our county were defined and the foundations of her twin daughters, the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, were laid on the banks of our own beautiful Elizabeth.

Though to Columbus belongs the glory of having made the first actual discovery of the new world, yet to the celebrated Venetian merchant, John Cabot, and to his more famous son, Sebastian, are due the credit of being the first who actually reached the main land. These distinguished navigators sailed in 1497, under the English flag, and with a patent from King Henry VIII., said to be the oldest State paper on American affairs extant in England. In the June of that year they discovered the Island of New Foundland, to which they gave the name "Prima Vista." Changing their course northward they reached the main continent amid the inhospitable regions of wintry Labrador.



In the year 1578, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a brother-in-law of Sir Walter Raleigh, obtained letters patent authorizing him "to discover and colonize remote heathen lands not possessed by any other Christian Prince." After repeated efforts, he procured a fleet of five vessels, with which he set sail in 1583, from Plymouth ; of these, four reached the coast of New Foundland in safety. Soon after his arrival he became discouraged and disheartened by the loss of another of his little fleet, and determined to return to England. On the home voyage he embarked in the "Squirrel," the smallest of his remaining vessels. After proceeding about three hundred leagues a violent storm arose, and the little craft was nearly cast away. On Monday, September 9th, at midnight, the light of the little ship disappeared, and her gallant commander and hardy crew slept forever in the deep. When last seen by those on the "Golden Hind," Sir Humphrey was seated quietly on deck with a book in his hand, and as they approached within hailing distance, he was heard to exclaim : "Be of good cheer, my friends, it is as near to Heaven by sea as by land."

The disastrous termination of this expedition, and the melancholy fate of his heroic kinsman, did not alter the determination of Raleigh to found a settlement in America. Being in high favor with Elizabeth, he easily obtained unlimited letters patent, dated March 25th, 1584, and by the aid of friends soon procured two vessels, which he placed under command of Amadas and Barlow. All things being ready, they set sail from the Thames, and in order to avoid the barren shoals and icebergs of the North, spread their sails to the sweet South, and on the 2d of July found shoal water, and smelt so sweet and strong a smell as if they had been in "the midst of some delicate garden abounding in all kinds of odoriferous flowers." This was the coast of sunny Florida. Directing their course to the northward, they entered Oracock Inlet, and landed on the Island of *Wocoken*, in what is now Albemarle Sound. Here they found the "valleys wooded with tall cedars, overrun with vines hung in graceful festoons ; the grapes clustering in rich profusion on the ground and trailing in the murmuring surges of the sea." In September Amadas and Barlow returned home, and such was the glowing description given by them of the country that Elizabeth, charmed and

delighted with her new possessions, gave it the name VIRGINIA, in commemoration of her state of life, being unmarried.

Raleigh, gratified and encouraged by these reports, was strengthened in his determination to found a permanent settlement in Virginia, and at once commenced active preparations to provide a fleet. This he was enabled to do without difficulty from the enormous revenue derived from his "wine monopoly." In 1585 a fleet of seven vessels, under command of his kinsman, Sir Richard Grenville—one of the fellow heroes of Cervantes, at the famous battle of Lepanto—was obtained for the expedition. Sir Ralph Lane was appointed Governor of the colony, which consisted of many distinguished men. Late in June the fleet anchored in Wocoken, but finding the situation too much exposed, and in the stormy region of Cape Hatteras, they proceeded through Oracock Inlet to the Island of Roanoke, which they selected as the seat of the colony. After landing, Lane explored the coast and extended his discoveries as far as the *town of Chesapeake, on Elizabeth river, near where Norfolk now stands*. This was the first discovery of our magnificent harbor and the noble bay of the Chesapeake, and these discoveries were regarded as the most important results which attended this effort to found a colony. Soon after dissatisfaction and dissensions arose among the colonists, and Lane determined to return to England. Thus ended the first actual settlement of the English in America.

These colonists, the exiles of a year, learned from the Indians the use of a narcotic plant called by them *uppowoc*, but to which they gave the name *tobacco*. Lane, upon his return to England, carried some of it with him, and Sir Walter Raleigh soon yielded to its seductive influence, and made its use fashionable at Court. On one occasion he handed his pipe to Elizabeth, who, after one or two whiffs, was made violently sick, and Sir Walter was charged with having poisoned her. Her speedy recovery, however, disproved the accusation, and the pipe was passed to her maids of honor, who were required to smoke it out among them. On another occasion, a country servant, entering Sir Walter's room with a tankard of ale, found him intently engaged in reading and smoking. Being greatly alarmed at the smoke which issued from his master's mouth, he threw the ale in his face and rushed down stairs, declaring that Sir Walter was on fire.



Notwithstanding these repeated failures, Raleigh did not abandon his design of founding a colony in Virginia, but in 1587 fitted out another fleet of three vessels, and directed the colonists to establish themselves as the "Governor and assistants of the City of Raleigh." John White was nominated Governor, with eleven assistants, and was ordered by Raleigh to plant the colony at the *Town of Chesapeake, within the limits of the present County of Norfolk.* The sagacity of Raleigh, who had never visited Virginia, was clearly demonstrated in the selection of our broad and eligible harbor as the site for the colony which was to bear his name, and indicates the deep interest of the great Statesman in the success of the efforts to add the "paradise of the new world" to the crown of that country upon whose flag the sun never sets.

The expedition reached Roanoke Island in July, and at once proceeded to search for the handful of men left by Grenville, as a garrison, but they found no vestige of life. "The tenements were deserted and overgrown with weeds, human bones lay bleaching in the sun, the deer crouched in the untenanted houses." The miserable men left in possession of the island had perished, but whether by the tomahawk of the Indian or the cruel hand of disease, can never be known. Failing in the search, instead of proceeding to the town of Chesapeake, as Raleigh had directed, the colonists were forced, by the avarice of Fernando, the naval commander, who preferred the more lucrative traffic of the West Indies to exploring the coast, to remain on the island, and there they founded the City of Raleigh, where, on the 18th of August, Eleanor, daughter of the Governor, and wife of Ananias Dare, one of the Councillors, gave birth to a daughter, the first white child born in America: she was for that reason christened Virginia Dare.

Difficulties again arising among the colonists, White determined to return to England for assistance, and although he found Raleigh absorbed in preparations to enable that country to successfully resist the attack of the "Invincible Armada," he obtained, through his assistance, two ships, with which he started for the relief of the infant colony; but instead of continuing his course he went in pursuit of Spanish prizes, and did not reach the long neglected settlement for three years. Upon his arrival he found the Island deserted, but

whether the colonists had perished or become amalgamated with the Hatteras Indians, is still involved in doubt. Thus by cupidity and avarice, and the disregard of Raleigh's instructions, the first plantation in Virginia, which had cost so much treasure, became extinct. Such a termination might have been expected. The site, which the disobedience of Fernando to Sir Walter's orders compelled the colonists to choose, was most unfortunate, being difficult of access and in the region of Cape Hatteras, whose name is synonymous with suffering, shipwreck and death. How different the result might have been, had Raleigh's judicious instructions been carried out, we can only conjecture. Notwithstanding these repeated failures, the English did not waiver in their determination to add Virginia as a colony to the Crown of England, and the period for the consummation of this long cherished desire at length arrived, and a fleet with a number of English settlers appeared on the bosom of the "*Mother of the Waters*," as Chesapeake Bay was called by the Indians.

In 1606 active measures were inaugurated to "deduce a colony into Virginia." In this enterprise Bartholomew Gosnold was prime mover, and John Smith chief actor. These distinguished adventurers obtained a charter from King James I., authorizing the establishment of two colonies in Virginia and other parts of America. Under this, *the first colonial charter of Virginia*, two colonies were formed. The First or Southern, and the Second or Northern Colony. Eventually these names were dropped and the name Virginia, which had been common to both, was appropriated to the Southern Colony, while the Northern was called New England.

Under this charter an expedition, consisting of three vessels, aggregating only 160 tons burthen, was organized and set sail December 19th, 1606. On the 26th of the following April they reached Chesapeake Bay, where they were providentially driven by a violent storm. The first land they came in sight of they called Cape Henry in honor of the Prince of Wales, and the second Cape Charles, for the King's second son, afterwards Charles II. In a few days a landing place was selected, to which they gave the name "Point Comfort," because it put them in *good comfort* after the storms and dangers through which they had passed. While here, they were



visited by several of the natives, who received them kindly and invited them to the village of Kecoughtan, now Hampton. Smith and his party, not being fully satisfied with the location, re-embarked and sailed for a beautiful river which appeared in the distance, which was called by the Indians Powhatan, but to which they gave the name James. Ascending about fifty miles from its mouth they landed, and selected a point, which they called *Jamestown*, as the seat of the colony.

Thus the first permanent settlement of the English in Virginia was effected, May 13th, 1607. Smith did not long remain idle, but at once commenced to explore the country, and during the latter part of July he visited *Chesapeake Bay*, and the *town of that name on Elizabeth river*, six or seven miles from its mouth. At this settlement he found three or four cultivated patches and a few houses, or cabins, and from this visit we may date the first actual and permanent settlement of our country.

In 1609, upwards of one ~~hundred~~ years before the Mayflower set sail from England, Governor Yearly summoned the first legislative assembly that ever convened in America. It met at Jamestown Friday, June 30th, and was composed of twenty-two Burgesses, as the members who were elected by the various townships were called. In 1634 the colony was, for the first time, divided into shires, or counties, eight being then designated. Norfolk was not one of them, and her name does not appear in any of the old records of our State, until 1639-40, when the Grand Assembly enacted an act, declaring "what shall be the bounds of *Isle of Wight, Upper and Lower Norfolk Counties*," and after this, the three counties were regularly represented in the Grand Assembly. In 1642, Upper Norfolk was divided into three parishes, "in order to the better enabling the inhabitants of the colony to the religious worship and service of Almighty God."

In 1645, an act was passed changing the name of Upper Norfolk County to Nansemond; and in 1691, Lower Norfolk, being too large, was divided into two counties, the part in which the Elizabeth river and its branches were contained, it was enacted, "should, from henceforth be called by the name of Norfolk;" the other part was formed into a new county and called Princess Anne. In 1705 NORFOLK town

was established, and in 1736 it was incorporated into a borough, and Sir Randolph Knight made Recorder ; it continued to be the county seat until 1789, when the court-house was removed to Powder Point, as this delightful village was then called. The first term of the court was held November 19th, in the house of Mrs. Shafer, which continued to be thus occupied, until the completion of the court-house and jail, which were used until 1801, when, upon the petition of the citizens, the county seat was changed to Portsmouth, and Samuel Hatton and others were appointed commissioners to sell the old court-house, which still stands, a landmark of the past.

In 1752 *Portsmouth* was established as a town. *William Crawford* having dedicated a portion of his farm to that purpose. His original plan contemplated one hundred and twenty lots. The old homestead, or farm house, stood, the oldest building in the city, until about the year 1857, when it was torn down to give place to the "Arcade," in which are now located Bidgood's harness establishment, and the office of the *Portsmouth Enterprise*.

Notwithstanding the influence of the Established Church, religious toleration soon found a foothold in Norfolk county, and as early as 1690, or very soon thereafter, a Presbyterian Church was erected on the banks of the Elizabeth river, probably the first of the denomination in America. The congregation was organized by the Rev. Mr. Makemie, "the father of the American Presbyterian Church," who soon after moved to Accomac county, and obtained from the Court a certificate of his qualification as a preacher, under the "toleration act," the first of the kind known to be of record in Virginia.

We have now reached a period in the history of Norfolk County, when she became the theatre of some of the most important and thrilling events of the Revolution. This was a time of peculiar hardship and privation to her people: for the rude hand of the invader was laid heavily upon her. Norfolk, her most thriving city, was given over to pillage and conflagration, and Portsmouth was, for a long time, the headquarters of the army of invasion.

In 1775 Dunmore, the Royal Governor, being a fugitive from his capitol, at Williamsburg, erected his standard at Portsmouth, and issued a proclamation, commanding all subjects on their allegiance to repair thereto. By this means he collected, in addition to the



regular forces under his command, a band of tories and runaway negroes, with whose assistance he was soon enabled to overrun and occupy the entire county. In October he landed, under cover of his gun-boats, a body of men in Norfolk and captured Holt's newspaper. This brilliant exploit was performed by an officer and twelve soldiers, aided by a man-of-war. The corporate authorities remonstrated against this outrage, but without avail. Holt published in the Williamsburg papers an eloquent philippic against Dunmore, and announced his intention of establishing another paper to advocate the same patriotic principles.

On the 7th of November Dunmore issued a second proclamation, calling upon all persons capable of bearing arms to rally to his support, or else be considered traitors and rebels. He also offered freedom to all slaves who would join him. This threat and offer brought to his aid a multitude of motley partizans. Being encouraged, he proclaimed martial law, and determined to undertake an expedition to Suffolk for the purpose of destroying the stores of the Virginia troops deposited there.

Woodford, the commander of the Virginians, anticipating this movement, and being warmly sustained by the State government, sent a detachment, under command of *Colonel Scott* and *Major Marshall*, to that town. Following with the main body of Virginians, he arrived on the 25th, and at once determined to march upon *Norfolk*. In the meantime Dunmore had intrenched himself in a strong position, on the north side of the Elizabeth river, near *Great Bridge*. These works were well supplied with artillery, and garrisoned by two hundred regulars and a large number of varlets of all colors. The natural advantages of the position were very great, being a long causeway flanked on either side by the swamp. Woodford, believing this the only practicable way to Norfolk, determined to capture the position, but being deficient in artillery, halted his forces within cannon shot of the enemy and began to throw up intrenchments. For several days no important demonstration was made by either army. When the preparations of the Virginians were completed, a battle was precipitated by an artful stratagem. A servant of Major Marshall, the *father* of the great Chief Justice, was instructed to desert to the enemy and give such information as would induce them

to assume the offensive and assault the works thus hurriedly constructed. This he did, and represented to the English that the rebel force consisted of only three hundred shirt men, as the Virginians, who mostly wore hunting shirts, were contemptuously called. Dunmore, elated by this information, dispatched two hundred regulars and about three hundred blacks and tories, with orders to capture the rebel works or die in the attempt. The next morning, just as the reveille was beating in the Virginia camp, the firing of guns announced the approach of the enemy. Woodford at once posted his men for action, and prepared to meet the onslaught of the heroic Fordyce, who was rapidly and gallantly advancing at the head of his brave grenadiers. As they entered the narrow causeway, and approached to within fifteen paces of the works, the Virginians delivered with terrific effect their fire, which they had reserved until that time. With devoted courage the brave Fordyce attempted to rally his shattered and wavering columns. Standing erect in his saddle, hat in hand, he exhorted them to press forward and "the day was their own." Waving his sword, he fell within a few feet of our works, pierced by many bullets—as noble a sacrifice as ever sanctified an unholy cause or gave lustre to a cruel invasion. His body was buried near the old church which formerly stood at the bridge. Nature, more appreciative of true bravery than his own country, which left him in an unmarked grave in a stranger land, erected his monument : a graceful cedar, from whose branches the birds of the forest sang peans to his bravery, and through whose foliage the winds of Heaven sighed his requiem.

The demoralization which followed his death gave an easy victory to Woodford's forces. The rout of the British was complete and their loss very heavy, including five officers. Of the grenadiers who followed Fordyce, not one escaped. Thus terminated, in a decisive victory, the battle of Great Bridge, which has been, not inaptly, styled a "Bunker Hill" in miniature ; and here, upon the soil of our *own county*, was enacted the *first* scene of Revolutionary bloodshed in Virginia.

Our forces, encouraged by this most providential victory, determined to follow it up by a rapid advance on Norfolk. Dunmore, demoralized by his defeat, hastily abandoned the fortifications of that

town and retreated to his vessels. Woodford, reinforced by Colonel Howe's command of North Carolinians, entered and took possession of the city on the 14th day of December, together with the guns abandoned by the enemy, and at once opened his batteries on the British fleet. Dunmore, greatly exasperated, determined to visit a severe retribution upon the patriots of Norfolk, and notified them, by flag of truce, that unless they would furnish him the provisions necessary for the troops and cease firing on his vessels, he would bombard the town. This demand met with a prompt and patriotic refusal ; and on the morning of January 1st, 1776, a body of men were landed at the county dock, under cover of a man-of-war, and the town fired. The flames spread with great rapidity, and the utmost efforts of the Virginians to arrest their progress were unavailing. For three days the conflagration raged, and only ceased when four-fifths of the beautiful town was in ashes. Soon after Colonel Howe, by order of the Committee of Safety, fired the remaining houses to prevent the British occupying it as a permanent post. The sufferings of the citizens were heartrending ; six thousand people were rendered homeless, and property estimated at £300,000 sterling was destroyed. On the 6th of February, Colonel Howe, who had superseded Woodford in command, evacuated Norfolk and fell back to Suffolk, leaving a detachment of troops at Great Bridge.

Time wore on ; the war dragged its slow length along, but nothing of interest occurred in our immediate vicinity until May, 1779, when Sir George Collier anchored in Hampton Roads, and General Matthews took possession of Portsmouth and established his headquarters in the town. On the 11th Fort Nelson, now the United States Naval Hospital, was abandoned by the garrison, who retreated to the Dismal Swamp, and was occupied by the enemy. Matthews extended his outpost to Gosport, where he captured more than one hundred vessels.

On the 20th of October, 1780, Brigadier General Leslie landed at Portsmouth with a force of 3,000 men, and at once commenced to fortify the town. His foraging parties committed many depredations on the surrounding country and along the coast, capturing a large amount of property and many small ships.

About this time an incident occurred almost rivalling in dramatic



interest, if not in its tragic denouement, the capture of Major Andre. A stranger, of suspicious appearance, was observed endeavoring to cross the lines from Portsmouth to North Carolina, where Lord Cornwallis was encamped. When arrested by the Virginia troops it was proposed to search him. To this he readily assented, but was observed at the same instant to put something, ostensibly a quid of tobacco, in his mouth ; when made to disgorge, it was found to be a letter, written on fine silk paper, and rolled in gold foil. It read as follows :

*To Lord Cornwallis, My Lord:—*I have been here near a week establishing a post. I wrote to you to Charleston, and by another messenger by land. I cannot hear with certainty where you are. I wait your orders. The bearer is to be handsomely rewarded if he brings me any note or mark from your Lordship.

*Portsmouth, Va., November 4th, 1780.*

A. L.

During the next year the British government determined to invade Virginia in order to humble the pride of her citizens, who were a stiff-necked and rebellious people. For this purpose Sir Henry Clinton, in December, 1780, ordered *Benedict Arnold*, with a body of troops, to proceed to that State. The traitor, with a fleet of fifty sail, arrived in Chesapeake Bay, and from thence proceeded to Richmond, the infant capital, and after spending some time in pillaging and devastating the surrounding country, returned to *Portsmouth* and there fixed his headquarters. Soon after he inaugurated a system of predatory warfare upon the people of the county. One of his raiding or foraging parties were attacked on the road near *Great Bridge* by the Virginia troops, and after a short skirmish, in which the officer in command was killed, their wagons were captured.

While Arnold was thus ensconced like a vulture at *Portsmouth*, Washington determined, if possible, to effect his capture, and sent a French "74," commanded by Monsieur D'Tilley, to the Chesapeake, with orders to attack that city. After a threatening demonstration she returned to Rhode Island. D'Tilley supposing her too large to operate successfully, her crew thus lost the opportunity of gaining not only a brilliant naval victory, but also of capturing the wretched traitor, for whose head Governor Jefferson had offered a reward of 5,000 guineas. Arnold, becoming seriously alarmed for his personal safety, was reinforced by General Phillips, who, uniting their re-

spective commands, determined upon an invasion of the surrounding country. His death, which occurred near Petersburg, of bilious fever, caused the expedition to be abandoned. Arnold succeeding to the command of the army, addressed a letter to La Fayette, which was forwarded by a flag of truce. Upon opening it, and seeing the name of the traitor signed thereto, he returned it unread, declining to hold any communication with so despicable a character.

Cornwallis determined to concentrate a part of his army at Portsmouth, and ordered Leslie with his forces to proceed to that place. At this time permission was given Arnold to visit New York, "where business of consequence demanded his attention." This was done, because the British officers found it irksome to serve under him, and Cornwallis frankly stated to La Fayette his contempt for his character.

The forces at *Portsmouth* were further augmented by the arrival of Lord Cornwallis, who crossed the James and reached the town July 9th, where he remained until taking post at Yorktown. Sir Henry Clinton, expecting a grand attack by the Continental forces upon New York, ordered Cornwallis to take position at Portsmouth or Williamsburg, so as to facilitate the transportation of the troops to that city should it become necessary. Cornwallis selected Yorktown as the most eligible position, and there, within four months, the closing drama of the Revolution was enacted.

With the return of peace came prosperity, and our county and section rapidly recovered from the effects of the war. Norfolk was rebuilt and was soon in the enjoyment of a large commerce, which continued to increase until the war 1812, when our harbor became the scene of a brilliant naval engagement. In June, 1813, a large and powerful British fleet arrived in Hampton Roads, and commenced active preparations to attack Norfolk, Portsmouth and the Gosport Navy Yard. The plan was a simultaneous demonstration by sea and land, on Craney Island, which commanded the approach to these places. A British force of about 5,000 men was landed on Pig Point, at the mouth of Nansemond river, with orders to advance and attack the Island on the west side, where the river was fordable, while the gun-boats from the fleet engaged the water batteries.

The forces upon the Island to resist the combined assault were

commanded by Colonel Beatty, and consisted of his regiment, the Winchester Battalion, Faulkner's Battalion of regulars, connected with which was ex-Governor Joe Johnson, the Portsmouth Artillery, and a detachment of marines and sailors, from the United States steamer "Constellation," under command of Lieutenant, afterwards Admiral, Shubrick. The armament was small, consisting only of the four six-pounders of the Portsmouth Artillery, and one or two pieces from the Constellation.

The gun-boats, under command of Admiral Cockburn, came nobly up to the work and bravely withstood the fire of our little guns. Your gallant and well remembered citizen, *Captain Arthur Emmerson*, commanded the Portsmouth Artillery, which acted during the engagement as an independent command, and to him belongs the honor of sighting and firing the gun which struck the Admiral's gun-boat, the "Centipede," and carried away a leg of her coxswain. Admiral Cockburn narrowly escaped the fate of his gun-boat, which was captured, and was only rescued from his perilous position by the activity with which the other boats came to his relief. The "Centipede" was brought to Portsmouth as a prize of war. The enemy then retreated, but the firing did not cease until the gallant Winchester Riflemen, anxious to give them a parting shot, had pursued them neck deep in the river. The first instance of a charge by Virginia infantry on gun-boats.

The credit of firing this decisive shot was claimed by Lieutenant Shubrick, but the proof afforded by an examination of the injury inflicted on the "Centipede," demonstrated that it was fired from one of the guns of the Portsmouth Artillery, which were so admirably handled by our county man, *Captain Arthur Emmerson*, "*the true hero of Craney Island.*"

The next day, at sunrise, our little gunboats attacked the British frigate "Junon," and would in all probability have disabled her but for the timely arrival of a "74," which opened a broad side, and compelled the Virginia navy to retreat.

The force landed at Pig's Point became so much demoralized from the number of desertions that they were sent back to the fleet, without making any demonstration; though some historians claim that an engagement did take place, in which the enemy were re-



pulsed with heavy loss. The same authority estimates the entire loss of the enemy in this engagement at two hundred men and three gun-boats. As at Great Bridge, our loss was inconsiderable. A quaker, whose conscientious convictions forbade his fighting, was assigned to duty at the magazine tent, and while carelessly smoking, a spark from his pipe ignited some powder and he was blown to pieces.

After this no serious demonstration was made by the enemy ; the ample preparations for their reception no doubt deterred them from further effort. General R. B. Taylor, who commanded the department, had an ample force to guard the approaches to Norfolk, and his Lieutenant, Colonel Freeman, with the garrison at Fort Nelson, kept vigil on the Portsmouth side.

I must now pass rapidly on, omitting many incidents of interest and importance, only pausing to mention the admirable public school system, organized in 1845, and continued up to the beginning of the late war. As indicating the warm interest of the people of our county in the cause of popular education, I point with pleasure to the revival of these schools, and esteem it a source of profound congratulation ; that amid the wreck and ruin following the termination of that struggle, our citizens found the time and means to re-establish them, and under the management of our competent and energetic Superintendent, they are fast regaining their former efficiency. The commencement exercises of "*Churchland Academy*," an institution founded more than a quarter of a century ago, which occurred on the 29th ulto., were of a highly interesting character, and indicated the success of the institution and the ability which characterizes its management. Fostered and encouraged as it should be, by all our citizens, it will not only become a feeder for our loved University and the other Colleges of the State, but an honor and credit to our county.

We have now reached the dark days of 1861, when a continent was riven by the "wild blast of secession and the earthquake shock of civil war." Of the merits or demerits of that unfortunate struggle, it is not my purpose to speak ; no good could result from such a discussion. Peace is the supreme need of our country, and the patriotic heart everywhere longs for reconciliation. It is best that the

dead past should bury its dead, and that the mantle of charity and forgetfulness should be thrown over all the incidents connected with that terrible contest, and that nothing should be remembered except the valor, the virtue, the fidelity to duty of those who offered themselves a holocaust to their country's need. Their memory should ever be cherished as a part of our priceless heritage, and their virtues should be commemorated in enduring marble and colossal bronze.

I shall not attempt a detailed account of the part Norfolk County sustained in that conflict ; it is fresh in the minds and memories of you all. From the first to the last she was true and unswerving in her fidelity and loyalty to the *Queen Mother, Virginia*, who claimed her highest allegiance ; and on every battle field, from Seven Pines to Appomattox, her sons stood shoulder to shoulder, with their compatriots of the "Army of Northern Virginia," and followed with unshrinking fortitude and devotion the tattered banners of immortal LEE ; until, amid the gloom of that disastrous April day, they laid down their well used arms in final surrender, and "with the consciousness of duty faithfully performed," gave their royal pledge of submission to the result, and returned to their impoverished homes. The fidelity with which they have maintained this pledge is worthy of all praise ; the assiduity and industry with which they have applied themselves to the honest labor of repairing their grievous losses, is worthy of the highest commendation, and to their conduct the present condition of our county is largely due—a condition which is as satisfactory as her past is glorious, and gives assurance of a future radiant with hope and promise.

Nature has done much for us, and it only requires energy and enterprise to utilize these advantages and turn them to good account. With a climate of unsurpassed salubrity and healthfulness, a soil of unrivalled fertility and productiveness, a location unsurpassed by any on the Atlantic coast, why should we not attain a position of great commercial prosperity and importance ? Our magnificent harbor and other advantages have attracted the attention and awakened the interest of statesmen of all ages, from the days of *Sir Walter Raleigh*, who was the first to appreciate them, down to the time of our loved and lamented scientist, the immortal *Maury*, and

they must sooner or later command recognition from intelligent emigrants who will then pour in upon us the wealth of their honest industry and untiring energy.

But, to bring about these results, *we must work*, remembering, there can be *no success without labor*. We must demand honest government and low taxation, which is its consequence. We must have impartial laws faithfully and fearlessly administered, and be ever ready with warm hearts and open hands to welcome, heartily welcome all who come to cast their destiny and make common cause with us. Emigration and capital are the great needs of our county, and every inducement should be offered to secure them. The world should know not only our natural advantages of soil, climate and location, but also the economy of living and the low rate of taxation, which will suffice to meet all the legitimate requirements of our county government. *With taxable property valued 'at about \$4,000,000, our county debt of all kinds will not aggregate \$10,000, or less than one-tenth the value of real estate and other property owned by the county.* Our population, which is rapidly increasing, now exceeds, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, that of any county in the State, Henrico and Richmond city alone excepted.

We must also learn the lessons of adversity and profit by the teachings of experience. The times are sadly out of joint, and bad men seem to have the mastery ; corruption, with hideous visage, stalks abroad, and with an infection as dangerous as it is widespread, permeates the high places of our country ; and if we would attain the position and prosperity to which our advantages entitle us, we must remember as a fundamental maxim, *that honesty is the prerequisite of all permanent success*, whether it be State or individual, and set our faces sternly and resolutely against *public repudiation in all its forms*, and *private dishonesty in all its multitudinous disguises*. We should stamp with the seal of disapprobation corruption in office and all betrayals of public trust. Social positions and political influence should afford no protection to the public plunderer or thieving official. Again, if we would mend our fortunes and repair our losses, we must shun the extravagances, the tinsel glare and glitter, that is now so fashionable, and settle down



to earnest work, determined to live *within our incomes* and avoid the maelstrom of debt and interest which has engulfed so many in ruin. We must return to the purity and simplicity of life which in the olden times made home happy and men contented.

These results we can achieve. The people of our entire country are anxious for reform, and it only requires, to bring it about, a statesman of enlarged mind and comprehensive intellect ; one who will subordinate party to country, and labor only for the glory, the prosperity and the stability of the American Union. A patriot whose highest ambition will be achieved and whose noblest aspirations will be realized in the restoration of peace to a distracted country, and prosperity and plenty to a panic-stricken land ; one who, solving the financial problems of the day, will restore confidence, re-establish credit, and cause the work-shops, the factories and the commercial marts of our entire country to teem with renewed life and vigor.

“ God give us men—a time like this demands,  
 Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands ;  
 Men whom the lust of office does not kill ;  
 Men whom the *spoils of office cannot buy* ;  
 Men who have opinions and a will ;  
 Men who have *honor*, men who will not lie ;  
 Men who can stand before a demagogue,  
 And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking !  
 Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog,  
 In public duty and in private thinking ;  
 For while the ~~f~~ rabble <sup>with</sup> ~~in~~ their thumb worn creeds,  
 Their large professions and their little deeds,  
 Mingle in selfish strife, lo ! Freedom weeps,  
 Wrong rules the land and waiting justice sleeps.”

Such men we have, and the popular demand that they be brought to the front indicates that the heart of the masses of our country favor purity and reform in the administration of public affairs. I repeat, both in our State and country, we have men capable, efficient, and in every way worthy our highest honors. Men whom modern degeneracy has not reached. *Virginia* and *Virginians* have not deteriorated, the halo of immortality, with which the fame and character of WASHINGTON encircled her queenly brow, was not obscured nor was its glory dimmed when ROBERT E. LEE, the peerless Christian soldier, consecrated his stainless sword and dedicated his

incomparable genius to her defence. Nor were the shirt men, who followed Woodford, more patriotic, more self-sacrificing, more devoted to duty, than those of you and your sons, who, under the leadership of your *gifted and lamented* NIEMEYER, your *chivalrous and knightly* STEWART, and your *Bayard-like* ETHERIDGE, withstood, with a heroism sublime in its invincibility, the magnificent charges of that grand corps of the "Army of the Potomac" when hurled, in deadly fury against them, by the splendid genius of the patriot soldier, *Winfield Scott Hancock*.

No, my countrymen have not degenerated : they only need to be aroused to the supreme necessities of the hour, and to learn what can be accomplished by tireless industry and well directed enterprise; and for an illustration of what can thus be achieved, I need only point you to this beautiful village which has given us, this day, a centennial welcome, and an evidence of its open-handed, generous hospitality ; for, so long as she continues to grow and prosper—and God grant she may do so till the end of time—she will stand a monument to the *energy*, the *enterprise*, and the *liberality* of the *honored citizen whose name she bears*.

But, while urging this persistent application to duty and to business, I would warn you to beware of the materialistic tendency of the age, and to guard against "the barbarisms that lurk in the lap of our boasted civilization." Do not become so engrossed in the accumulation of wealth as to lose sight of the true end and aim of life. Wealth is only desirable for the benefits it enables its possessor to confer, and the wealthy man is an acquisition to society only in proportion to the good he does to his fellow men and the community. Do not become so absorbed in business as to forget home and its refining influences, for from thence must come your purest pleasures and sweetest consolations. And, oh ! *ladies*, in this work give to your husbands, fathers and brothers your loving sympathy and co-operation. Guard them in the day of temptation, and ever exert the power of your influence for good ; add to this influence the force of example, and choose for your great exemplars those *Virginia matrons*, in whose character all the attributes of true womanhood were so conspicuously and beautifully blended. Ladies, I point you with reverential pride to MARTHA, the *wife* of WASHINGTON, and MARY, the wife of LEE.

And now, my countrymen, we stand upon the threshold of another century. Let us forget that we have been enemies, and remember only the ancient friendship and the former love. The Union is restored. Let us ask only that ~~there~~<sup>there</sup> be a *Constitutional Union of free, equal and independent States*; that no star on the blue of yonder flag, shall differ from another star thereon in glory, but that all may shine with an equal splendor. For such a Union we most devoutly pray, and reiterate the pledge of one hundred years ago—to defend it “with our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

“Thou, too, sail on, O, Ship of State !  
 Sail on, O Union, strong and great !  
 Humanity with all its fears,  
 With all the hopes of future years,  
 Is hanging breathless on thy fate !  
 We know what master laid thy keel,  
 What workman wrought thy ribs of steel,  
 Who made each mast, and sail and rope.  
 What anvils rang, what hammers beat,  
 In what a forge and what a heat,  
 Were shaped the anchors of thy hope !  
 Fear not each sudden sound and shock,  
 'Tis of the wave, and not the rock :  
 'Tis but the flapping of the sail,  
 And not a rent made by the gale !  
 In spite of rock and tempest roar,  
 In spite of false lights on the shore,  
 Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea,  
 Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee.  
 Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
 Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
 Are all with thee, are all with thee.”

























LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 444 085 7